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2.

# REASONS

FOR

# REFORMATION.

BY JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq.

THEIR RIGHT HAND IS FULL OF BRIBES.

Psalms, xxvi. 10.

*These are the sellers and buyers who have profaned the Temple of our Freedom, and made it a den of thieves. These are the men who now feelingly say to one another,*  
"SIRS, YE KNOW THAT BY THIS CRAFT WE HAVE OUR WEALTH: LET  
"US RAISE AN UPROAR AGAINST JACOBINISM AND CONSPIRACY, OR OUR  
"CRAFT WILL BE IN DANGER"

The Author's Letter to a Friend at Boston, 1793.

PRINTED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FUND FOR ADVERTISING IN THE  
CAUSE OF PARLIAMENTARY REFORMATION, MANAGED BY  
MR. S. BROOKS, NO. 110, STRAND.

LONDON:

Printed by J. M'Creery, Black-Horse-Court, Fleet-Street.

PUBLISHED BY BONE AND HONE, OPPOSITE SOMERSET-  
HOUSE, STRAND.

1809.



REASONS  
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THEIR RIGHT HAND IS FULL OF BRIBES.

*The Bible.*

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OFFICIAL "REPORTS" from Commissioners and Committees of Inquiry for some years past, of abuses and corruptions without end, together with the scourge of a taxation that "draws blood at every stroke," was gradually operating an important change in the temperament of the body politic. It still however, lay in a death-like trance, apparently destitute of feeling and of thought. All around was gloom and despondence. No legislator, no statesman, no minister, appeared capable of suggesting means for our preservation. The public mind seemed stricken with blindness, national patriotism to be dead, and our country left without hope. To remove this blindness, to revive this patriotism, and to recal this hope, it pleased Providence to raise up a WARDLE.

And has not the investigation of our reforming patriot, like the rod of the delivering prophet, even wrought a miracle? Moses, in the parched desert, where no water was; touched the flinty rock, and out gushed a living spring, to refresh and to preserve the People of Israel. WARDLE, when public virtue seemed to be a bye-word and a reproach, touched *the House of Commons*, and out gushed a stream of patriotism, that has already greatly refreshed the land, and which I trust will be eminently instrumental to the deliverance of the people of England, a people through whose hearts that touch has likewise vibrated. The small, but illustrious, band to whom I have alluded, have sealed themselves in the forehead, as the faithful servants of the state. They have at once scorned the ignoble shackles of faction, and shut against themselves the door of St. James's. They have given themselves to their country.

In the late parliamentary contest, what is it that we have seen? On the one hand, a WARDLE and his honest supporters attacking corruption in its strongest fortress, bringing delinquency to

shame, and laying before the nation proofs of criminality: On the other hand, the minister and his myrmidons of the RED BOOK making common cause with corruption, casting a shield over delinquency, and calling that, INNOCENCE, which the independent part of parliament and the nation, *on the same evidence*, have pronounced to be guilt!

But let us scrutinize the validity of this parliamentary verdict of innocence. By a Report of the Committee of Finance, laid on the table of the house in June last, it appears that, exclusive of all collateral causes of undue influence, *seventy-eight* of its members themselves, as PLACEMEN AND PENSIONERS, are annually receiving *one hundred and seventy-eight thousand, nine hundred and ninety-four* pounds of the public money, *given them by the CROWN*; and on referring to the said RED BOOK, respecting naval and military members, whose *means of acquiring fame*, be it remembered, depend on the minister, after passing over one whose connexion with the regular army is doubtful, the writer again finds, by an amusing circumstance, other *seventy-eight* members belonging to those services; so that here are in the whole *one hundred and fifty-six* members who have a *direct interest* in being subservient to the court. As ministers have not favoured us with a list of the majority, in which the balance on the side of the late Commander in Chief's *innocence* was eighty-two; we are under a necessity of inferring that the regular official *seventy-eight* placemen and pensioners were at their post. Then supposing only *one-seventh* part of the naval and military commanders to have engaged on that occasion under the banner of the minister, this will give us *eighty-nine* of the *Inquest* who ought, without dispute, in a question *between the crown and the people*, either to have absented themselves from the house, or to have preserved a decent silence. With this amendment, so necessary to justice and even to *appearances*, we shall then find a verdict of *guilty*, by the votes of 125 against 118.

But this is not all, there are wealthy members of that house, and amongst others, the *representatives of counties*, who pretend to independence and disinterestedness, because, forsooth, they are not placemen; while yet they perpetually condescend to solicit of the minister, and to accept on behalf of their relatives and creatures all they can get. Instead of placemen they are then *placehunters*; and equally servile in themselves, and equally unfaithful to those of whom they are nominally the parliamentary attorneys.

Now, let us advert to the provisions for *independent voting* in the parliament, and in the court of the East India Company, the sovereigns of an immense country, meaning the court of directors. By the Act of the 33d of the king, c. 52, passed in 1793, every director on being elected, is made to take an oath, that he *neither is, nor will be interested* in any vessel employed by the company, unless by inheritance, bequest, or marriage, and in any such case will forth

with part with the same, or, in default thereof, will "VACATE" his seat; he also swears that he "will not directly or indirectly accept or take any perquisite, emolument, fee, present, or reward, upon any account whatsoever, for or in respect of places, offices, appointments, voyages, or any ways relating to, any other business or affairs of the said company:" "That in the office of a director, he will be indifferent and equal to all manner of persons;" and that in any case wherein he shall have a private interest, he will give previous notice of the same, and that he will WITHDRAW from such court or committee during the discussion thereof, and will not return thereto until after such business or businesses shall be decided upon.

Whenever, therefore, a Wardle or a Burdett, a Folkstone or a Whitbread, shall move for an exclusion of placemen and pensioners from the Common's House of Parliament, I trust that ALL who therein shall have a private interest, "will WITHDRAW from" the House, "during the discussion thereof, and will not return thereto until after such" motion "shall have been decided upon."

As in the late inquiry it appeared that commissions in the army were given on the recommendation of general officers and members of parliament, it is satisfactory, that a motion is intended to be made for the production of so much of the book in which those recommendations have been recorded, as relates to members of parliament. But such motion will not be complete unless it extend to the Ordnance and Admiralty, and above all, to the Treasury. By these disclosures, the picture of parliamentary independence, and the lofty pretensions of many, would be seen in a proper light.

Dire experience has at length discovered to us the motive to that universal argument of placemen, and of all manner of persons who have ever felt a desire that a part of the public taxes should find a way into their private pockets, or those of their family and friends, namely, that the crown ought to have some influence over the decisions of the House of Commons. And time has likewise manifested the extreme weakness of those who have been duped into a concurrence in that sentiment, equally unconstitutional, absurd, and pernicious. The recent decision of Mr. Wardle's proposition has been admirably calculated for begetting a correct opinion on this question, of crown influence over the people's representatives. Is there a man of so obtuse an intellect?—is there a man of so depraved a heart as not to think the question, although affecting the king's son, ought to have been decided with a sacred regard to justice, and to justice alone? How has it been decided? Can the minority, who by their votes have barred against themselves the road to place, to power, to wealth at the public expense, and to glittering honours, be suspected of

having voted without a regard to justice? What but an imperious sense of justice could have been the motive to their vote? Among these we find, not one placeman or pensioner; only one officer of the navy, and one of the army. But was it a pure source of justice which caused all placemen, pensioners, and the far greater part of the naval and military members, to vote in direct opposition to the independent and the disinterested part of the House? And was there ever a question on which the sense of the nation in general, judging from *the same evidence* as was laid before parliament, was more decidedly expressed on the conduct of a majority of the House of Commons? If in the case before us, a case wherein the king's son, between whom and the throne there are but two lives, was affected, the crown influence, which has been visible, has been universally reprobated, is there, can there be a case, in which any thing so hostile to the constitution, so subversive of justice, and so destructive of liberty as *crown influence over the people's representatives*, can be defended? It is time we struck to the ground all prejudice in favour of a principle so monstrous and so insane.

A Commons' House of Parliament in oratorical flourishes, has been likened to a *jury*, but although in one sense we admit it to be a national *inquest*, be it noticed, that *inquest* and *jury* are not synonymous; one, taking its denomination from having been *sworn*, the other, from its duty to *inquire*. A jury indeed *inquires*, but it does not *accuse*; whereas, it is in their very capacity of *accusers*, that the Commons in Parliament *inquire*. A jury is to be *indifferent* between man and man, and equally so between *the king and his subjects*, and the law has many provisions against its being *appointed* or *packed* by either. But the Commons in Parliament are *not to be indifferent* between the king and his subjects. On the contrary, they are to be the special protectors of them *against* him, the vigilant sentinals *to watch* his movements; and the courageous guardians of public rights *against* his or any other power; and more especially in whatever relates to elections; for every man of them are required by the constitution to be freely elected by the people, and of their sole appointment.

As a *vote* and a *verdict* ought doubtless on all occasions to be given with equal integrity, let us consider what we ought at all times to expect in regard to a *verdict*. If in a trial in an ordinary court of justice for an estate between A and B, a *verdict* had been given against A, and it had afterwards been discovered that B had by intrigue got a decided majority of his own principal servants on the Jury, or had bribed as many of them with lucrative employments, or with pensions for life, could persons so acting have ever after looked an honest man in the face! would not punishment have followed their crimes, and infamy have attended them to their graves? But, were not even *such* iniquity lamb-like in-

nocence, compared to a corrupt commerce between a nation's minister and its legislators,—between the king's confidential servant and the people's representatives?

By what species of delusion is it, that the nation has been taught to endure the sight of placemen and other dependents on the crown, in the capacity of *voting* members of its Commons' House of Parliament? How has it been reconciled to the beholding of a single man in such a predicament? A corrupt sophistry may affect to shew a distinction between money, or other gratification, given for a juryman's *verdict*, and a member of parliament's *vote*, but in the impartial eye of reason, they are equally bribes, rank bribes, given and taken by the unprincipled, for purposes the most criminal. What were the wrong, or even the ruin, of an individual, who under the most adverse fortune might retain virtue and happiness, to the betraying and enslaving a whole nation through the medium of cutting up its morals by the roots! An individual person may be wronged of one estate, but he may have another. If not broken in constitution as well as bankrupt in fortune, if not blasted in character as well as defrauded of his property, his loss, by arduous exertion, may even lead to the improvement of his condition. But not so can it be with a nation when not only pillaged by its servants, but corrupted, enslaved, and degraded by those who ought to instruct, as well as to rule? Such a nation becomes at last too feeble and contemptible even to choose its own tyrant. Between prize-fighting despots, the most dextrous of them becomes its master: as the experience before our eyes hath abundantly shewn. When shall we profit by the examples of the fallen nations, and set about that reformation without which England cannot stand? When shall we discover that a House of Commons, to be indeed the guardian of liberty and property, must be as pure as a genuine English jury, and as unsuspected as a Cæsar's wife?

As corruptions seem to have contaminated every department, and to have infected all orders in the state, half-thinking persons are led to imagine this variety of corruptions are so many different state diseases; and, from the hitherto fruitless attempts, and apparent difficulty of extermination, the timid and desponding have thought the case incurable. But these are errors. We have not here a complication of different distempers, but a mere variety in the symptoms of one and the same disease: and having once discovered the cause, and the seat of that disease, we know the cure. This discovery will not be difficult.

In order to form a right judgment, we must analyse our constitution and legislature; our government founded on the basis of *natural right, national liberty*, and the *common weal* is unquestionably in the strictest sense a common-wealth. The Commons' House of Parliament, which ought to be a genuine emanation



from, and representation of, the nation, as well as the exclusive guardian of its purse, is of this government the vital organ. It is the only branch which is *essential* to LIBERTY. It is at once both its effect and its cause. It is the pure gold of the constitution; while aristocracy and royalty are the alloys, but the useful alloys, intended to add firmness to the gold, that it may wear well and durably. Besides, royalty furnishes the impression that gives it currency as true English coin, and a character of sacredness to preserve it from adulteration.

To proceed, political liberty and parliamentary representation are in effect convertible terms. Although not perfectly synonymous, yet we cannot conceive the one, without inferring the other. Hence, it appears, that of a state, liberty is its *health*; and that every departure therefrom has in it more or less of *disease*. Hence also we learn, that, *in a body politic*, whatever sores break out, or whatever symptoms of disease appear, the true root, the real disease is, and must be, in the *vital organ*. There we shall find the evil; there we must apply the remedy.

The human stomach is called the *conscience* of the body; because its *early admonitions* preserve health. If the Commons' House truly represented the people, it would be the *conscience* of the state. Then the first indications of disease would be there *felt*, and a remedy immediately *applied*. But it has hitherto been the art of those who had a corrupt interest in its *not* representing the people, to cheat the nation into hopes of relief, from the *wisdom of ministers*, the *virtue of placemen*, and the sorry nostrums of *committees and commissions of inquiry*, employed to amuse a deluded public by the solemn parade and bustle of making *every inquiry except the right one*:—AN INQUIRY INTO THE STATE OF THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE IN PARLIAMENT! In order to make a proper estimate of committees and commissions of inquiry appointed by the House of Commons, as cures, or preventives, or remedies of corruption, we have only to consider how in fact that house is now constituted, and how in respect of court influence, it is circumstanced. To go through the detail exhibited in the celebrated petition for a reform in parliament, placed on the journals of the house by the present Earl Grey on the 6th of May 1793, would at this time be equally tedious and disgusting. We will pass over the farrago of folly, absurdity, and monstrous injustice in the state of our representation there made conspicuous, to put our finger on this fact, that the petitioners asserted that “a decided *majority*” of the House, namely 307 of its members, (the whole then being only 558) were returned by 154 “powerful individuals,” the greater part of whom were “PEERS.”

As in most of their cases the petitioners tendered “legal evidence,” and closed many of their allegations with, “this your

petitioners are ready to prove," we may be confident they took good care to *keep within compass*, for they were persons fully acquainted with the danger of "infamy," attaching to a failure in proofs of corruption at the bar of the "Honourable House" they were addressing; one species of proof on which they offered to rely was somewhat singular: "If," said they, "*the members in question* [the 307] can be made *parties to the inquiry*, your petitioners will name them, and be governed by *the testimony which themselves shall publicly give*." That such members *might* have been "*made parties to the inquiry*," we have now learned; for in the late investigation we have seen every member on either side of the question, not excepting the accuser, liable to examination and cross examination. Will it be believed? Can it be credited by a nation now unanimously thanking Mr. Wardle for his investigation into the conduct of the king's son, and the Commander in Chief of his Armies, that the House of Commons of 1793, should not have deigned even to refer to a committee, a petition of such infinite importance to the liberties of the people and the welfare of the state! With indecent scorn of the people, the motion to that effect was negatived by a corrupt majority of 282, against 41!—of 558 members, 41 only were found faithful, and the *Borough Faction* triumphed! Allow me here to repeat the words I ten years ago used in reference to that petition and that faction. "Sooner or later, as feeling or reflection shall operate on the public, *that petition is destined to beat down all their shameful usurpations into the dust*."\* Thanks to Mr Wardle, that time seems to be drawing near.

Let us now pass on to another statement respecting our representation, which was not made at the bar of the House, but at the bar of the public; in which case, as neither the terrors of "infamy" nor of *expulsion*, hung over the heads of the parties, may, probably, have come nearer to the truth of facts than the reserved and cautious statement in the aforesaid formal petition. The statement now alluded to was made in the Morning Chronicle of the 12th of January 1798. It was in these words.

"Distribution of the 558 members.

" Returned by the influence of, or nominated by peers,	243
" By commoners, having boroughs, &c. - - - - -	159
" By the Treasury - - - - -	22
	<hr/>
	424
" By the voice of the people, - - - - -	134
	<hr/>
	558"

But how are these last mentioned members returned " by the

\* Appeal, 127.

voice of the *people*," that is, by the electors for the most part of the *open* boroughs? Mr. PITT, in debate on the 7th of May 1782, after commenting on the *close* boroughs, spoke as follows: "Another set of boroughs and towns in the lofty possession of English freedom, claim to themselves the right of bringing their votes to market. Such boroughs are the most dangerous of all others. So far from consulting the interests of their country in the choice which they make, they hold out their borough to the best purchaser, and in truth they belong more to the *Nabob of Arcot*, or the *Rajah of Tanjore*, than to the people of Great-Britain. They are more within the jurisdiction of the *Carnatic*, than the limits of this island; and *it is a fact*, that the *Nabob of Arcot* has no less than seven or eight members in this house. Such boroughs then are sources of corruption, they give rise to an inundation of corrupt wealth and *corrupt members*, who have neither regard nor connexion either for, or with, the people of this kingdom. *Might not a foreign state in enmity with this country by means of these boroughs, procure a party of men to act for it under the mask and character of members of this house?*" "Such a cabal is more to be dreaded than any other; and this, among other domestic evils, is to be apprehended from the present incomplete and improper frame of representation."—*Their right hand is full of bribes.*

What was thus, at the election in 1807 which gave us the present House of Commons, obviously practicable, no man can say did then actually take place. No man can deny that *Bonaparte* had then the *means* of having in your very parliament twice as many of his spies and intriguing agents, as had been so seated there by an *Indian prince*. Is the *Emperor* in the use of such means, less adroit, or more scrupulous than a *Nabob*? If history informed him that a French monarch had once for his pensioner, and in his regular pay, even a king sitting on an English throne, and basely hiring himself to France to betray the liberties of England,\* why was he to despair of finding amongst the profligate speculators of our country (who could buy seats in your House of Commons at 5000l. a piece) hirings adapted to his purpose? When he designed to *drive from their thrones* the kings of Spain and Portugal, did he not pave his way by French gold? Did he not corrupt the *national councils*? Who in an English House of Commons would be more cheered by ministers and a borough majority than such members as should be loudly adverse to *conciliating his protégés the Irish Roman Catholics*? or who should pertinaciously *support the pension and sinecure system of governing*, or the *buying of votes with reversionary grants*? or who, by arguments which have been a thousand times refuted, should *oppose a reform in that house*? And *who could be better friends to Bonaparte* than members so acting? Or what coun-

\* Meaning Charles II.

cils could more directly tend to *drive from his throne the king of England?*—*Their right hand is full of bribes.*

That, in almost all the *open* boroughs, votes are a commodity as vendible as any in the shops, is as notorious as it is shocking. Although some caution is used to avoid a legal conviction of bribery, no voter is even offended at the plainest imputation of the crime, as applying to the electors in general.—*Their right hand is full of bribes.* The writer, on announcing himself a candidate for the borough of Boston, on the 31st of October 1806, began his printed address thus, “Gentlemen, understanding it to be *the point of honour*, in a Boston election, for every candidate who *stands a poll*, to give *five guineas a man* to all such of the electors who vote for him, and will accept of the money, but thinking such a custom would be more honoured in the breach than in the observance,” &c. &c. For this plain language he did not receive a single incivility; and of 549 votes, 59 were given to him.—*Their right hand is full of bribes.*

Again, at the election for the county of Lincoln in May 1807, he publicly from the Hustings, when surrounded by the electors of the city, and afterwards in the newspaper, as plainly charged those electors with the habitual crime of bribery; and stated in particular, that an agent from their city had been a few weeks before at Boston, to pay the out-voters residing in that town and its vicinity, for the votes given to Mr. Ellison, (then a candidate for the county) at the preceding election in 1806; that he could name the agent, and specify how many guineas a man had been given; and recommending to Mr. Ellison, if he conceived himself injured, to bring his action. The electors took no offence; nor did Mr. Ellison prosecute.—*Their right hand is full of bribes.* There must be a rampart opposed to this tide of venality, or England, like the corrupt courts and enslaved nations of the continent, must shortly, for want of a common interest between the people and the government, submit to the yoke of the Corsican.

While, through the combined effects of decay and corruption, to place in the Commons' House an honest and independent man, seems to require little short of a miracle, the motly oligarchical body, usually styled the *Borough Faction*, take possession, it seems, of 424, seats, and call them their inheritance; nor are the doors by any means barred against the most immoral of men. A seat in the Parliament is in high life, the ordinary refuge of a spend-thrift, to keep him out of a gaol; and we have lately known one of these seats for a borough, for—*Their right hand is full of bribes*—bought by an imprisoned adventurer, who thereby obtained his liberation; and laughing at the idea of calls of the house, or parliamentary duties, immediately quitted the kingdom; at once mocking his over-reached creditors, and exposing to derision a system under which such shameful things are practicable. But this trafficking in parliamentary seats is as notorious as ever

was the trafficking in military commissions. None seem ashamed of it, from the petty lottery-broker to the lordly secretary of state; and we have lately seen a bankrupt actually stating to his creditors in writing, that he had expended 5000*l.* in purchasing his seat in parliament; and that he had farther paid the sum of 200*l.* for pictures of his triumphal entry into the sink of corruption that returned him.—*Their right hand is full of bribes.* Those who wish for further particulars, may inquire at Wooton Bassett.

In the case indeed of one individual of the 658, we have witnessed a splendid exception to a general picture of the most gloomy and shocking kind. We have, to the infinite honour of Westminster, seen *one* constitutional body exhibiting a virtuousness worthy of the best times; and *one* Representative elected for his integrity, unaided by aristocratic combination or patronage, or by the strength of his own purse. But does not such a solitary gleam of light serve only to render the surrounding darkness more visible? Although this, possibly, may not be the only election case, by which a member has been returned to the House, in a manner every way consonant to the constitution, and by a body *not less numerous* than the constitution requires, yet, were a reward as great as that for the longitude to be offered to him who should discover *three* such instances, or perhaps even *two* only, there are strong reasons for suspecting such reward could not be claimed.

*If we desire Reformation*, what so easy as to divide Great Britain, by means of the late *census of its population*, into 558 (or any smaller and more approved number of,) vi'counties (or communities under any other denomination) with all due attention to equality, or rather to *fairness*; that regulated by a ratio compounded of population, and of relative distance from the seat of legislation? The principle here suggested, has in one instance, partly analagous, been adopted by parliament and acted upon. Conveyance of letters by post, is, like many others, a common right; but it was perceived, that if postage should be exactly proportioned to mere distance, then a residence in Scotland, to one having correspondence with the capital, must, as it were, operate in manner of a never-ceasing cause of fine; while a man, within a tenth part of the distance, might transact *the same business* at a tenth part of the expense. A modification to meet such unfairness was therefore properly introduced.

As it is likewise plain, that, equally to the *constituents* and to the *representatives*, great pecuniary and other advantages are necessarily enjoyed by those of them who reside at or near the seat of legislation, over such as inhabit the extreme parts of the kingdom, so justice seems to require a countervailing modification in the *quantum* of population which should be entitled to one representative. Possibly, half the number of electors in

Orkney and Caithness that should be required in the capital to furnish one member of parliament, with suitable intermediate proportions, might remove the old, and indeed solid objection, to *equal* representation as regulated by *numbers only*, as *such* equality would give the capital an undue preponderance in the legislature; and thus a *fair* and equitable distribution of the most important of all common rights might be established.

*If we desire Reformation*, what, again, so easy, as indiscriminately to communicate *representation* to all whom the law subjects to direct *taxation*; simply requiring an enrolment in every parish, ward, or other division, of the *taxed householders*; with an appendix containing *the other tax-bearers* therein residing; and such enrolment to be the sole qualification? Thus, to use the customary *metaphor*, *property* of every description would be *represented*; and a long catalogue of absurd distinctions disfiguring the celestial face of justice, and prolific of mischievous litigation, as well as of ruinous expense, would be put an end to. But as it is contrary to the spirit of this reformation to *disfranchise* any, so a temporary exception should seem to be necessary, in favour of such persons as at present enjoy the right of suffrage, although not coming within the qualification now proposed, should seem to be necessary. Such persons might, during their lives, retain the right, and be inscribed in a supplementary temporary roll.

*If we desire Reformation*, why not return at once, to that which was esteemed “the quintessence, the life and soul of the constitution, the annual exercise of elective power?”\*

All convenient equality in the elective bodies, should seem to dictate equality of qualification for being elected. It might be made universally 500*l.* per annum; in which case the average would be higher than at present. To these simple expedients, it does not seem conceivable that an objection can be started, but what any child in politics could refute; and which has not indeed been already refuted a thousand times.

To this concise outline of reformed elections, the writer, according to his own private opinion, but with some diffidence, would add an *unevadable* ballot. He knows that on this point he has against him most respectable authorities—and what is more, reasons of very considerable force;—reasons to which, with his ardent love of liberty, he must listen with all possible partiality: But still, so far as he has become acquainted with the arguments of those who oppose a ballot in the elections of representatives, it appears to him, that none of them have gone to the bottom of the question, and that there is a real preponderance of motive, compounded of justice and wisdom, on the side of an efficient ballot.—It is therefore from a sense of duty he

here suggests the measure, that it may be fully discussed, and true wisdom finally prevail.

Unless the nobles of our own country be made of better stuff than in other nations, we may expect, as soon as we come to actual measures, all manner of inventions and devices for leaving in the House of Commons **AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE** of those adulterations which are our bane, and which the constitution abhors. Smooth and specious orations in abundance will flow around, for warning us against too great a departure from *practice*, or too wide a deviation from *usage*; that is, in plain English, against curing the corruptions of representation, and healing the bleeding wounds of liberty.

It is **PRACTICE**, it is **USAGE** of which our liberties are expiring. So incurably vicious, so abominable in all respects, are our **PRACTICE** and our **USAGE**,—they are such wild and extravagant departures from principle and common sense,—such palpable frauds and forgeries on the constitution,—such rank violations of morals and decency,—and they are so inveterately corrupt, they cannot be touched without danger; they cannot be even looked upon without disgust and horror. Professedly to retain a particle of such **PRACTICE** and such **USAGE** would afford a reasonable presumption of imposture. Intentionally to take them as the basis of a new system, would be to proclaim, that we meant to be as dishonest and as treacherous as the credulity or abused confidence of our country would permit. Our corrupt system is a **WEN**, grown to a bloated magnitude, exceeding the bulk of the whole body of the constitution, which it has laid prostrate and nearly suffocated. It occupies more than a hundred acts of parliament; while the constitution itself may be described in half as many words.

The **WEN** must be severed. Those acts of parliament, not increased to another hundred, by explaining and amending, by cobbling and tinkering, ought to be indiscriminately repealed. Our work is not that of special pleaders, but of legislators; not that of petty-foggers, but of statesmen; not that of clerks or secretaries, but of saviours of a sinking state. As had our ancestors of old time, so have we, for our commission and a test of rectitude, the **ENGLISH CONSTITUTION**. We are conversant with the principles of *political liberty*. We know the nature of *representation*. We understand how to secure the freedom of *election*. To these, and to these alone, if we would meet the exigency of the times, if we would prevent the throne and government from falling in ruins on our head, and preserve ourselves from chains, we must steadily look: On these, and these alone, when the decayed and worn-out system shall have been repealed, must the new one be founded and built up. And here let it be observed, that to so much of former **PRACTICE** and **USAGE** as, in mere quality of materials, can here naturally and without sacri-

vice be properly worked up, there is so far from an objection, that, like old weather-proof tiles, they are ever to be preferred to such as have been untried.

Wealth according to *practice* and to *usage*, may be expected to exert all its influence, power all its authority, and sophistry all its fine metaphorical logic, its mysterious reasoning, and its metaphysical jargon, that we may effect in the way of reformation AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE. But, thanks to the Almighty! *political liberty, representation, and election*, are extremely simple. And thanks to our unlettered ancestors! the English constitution is not built on fictions and shadows, but on substantial rights and wholesome customs, which it required not any book-learning to feel, to understand, and to practice. If it be only when the nation's awful voice is raised, it can obtain any reformation at all; let us hope it will not now be raised in vain; nor its work be done by halves!

It is somewhat late in the day of discussion on the subject of reforming our elections, and has not the best grace, for *public* men now to profess themselves *reformers*, but with an express reservation of a right to object to any specific plan which may not square with their *unexplained* opinions. If reformers in *reality*, the best mode of promoting their object, and at the same time of guarding against the wild projects and insidious schemes of *others*, should seem to be to offer *their own*.

It has not been for nothing, most assuredly, that, instead of a single statute touching elections—a statute, which surely the concentrated knowledge and capacity of England might draw—we can count in the statute book down to the year 1804, no fewer than 112 acts of parliament, on the subject; while yet our elective system, for its gross absurdity, its monstrous iniquity, and its destructive effects, moral and political, sets the whole world at defiance to produce a parallel!

Under the system which natural decay, corruption, abuse, and this mountainous pile of acts of parliament have produced, it were nearly an impossibility, that REAL STATESMEN should arise? It is the very nature of the system to exclude such characters, and even to extinguish the race; as we must infer from comparing the reigns of Charles the First, and George the Third. *Such* a system cannot create them within itself, for how is *such* a system at once to furnish talent and *integrity*? and where *such* a system produces *talent*, must not that talent be a pest and a scourge? Yet, as the system embraces twice as many competitors as can at the same time possess the power and emoluments of office, the *ins* and the *outs* are at eternal war. For this cause, the time, the thoughts, the abilities of each party, instead of being occupied on the sublime science of civil government, for human happiness and their country's prosperity, are almost wholly engrossed by the factious plans and plots, and



the circumventing schemes and operations of this contemptible warfare, with sufficient contempt (on both sides it must be confessed) for the rights, the liberties, and the interests of a nation, which it is rather the object to rule, than to serve. And as under this shocking system, every thing is reversed, even its *short* parliaments afford the people no relief; for as every general election, while the borough system shall remain, must of course be in favor of the *ins*; so it is necessary to every new minister to call on his copartners, the *borough faction*, for a new parliament, which he decently proclaims to the public, from the lips of his sovereign, to be "*an appeal to his people.*" Audacious profanation!

*Formerly* the people had in their own hands both the choice and the payment of their representatives, and moderate wages were raised by a county or town rate. The people were consequently careful in their choice, and it was as natural that the persons chosen should likewise be careful of their conduct. *Now*, for the most part, the people are denied any choice of those who have an absolute command of their liberties and substance; the electors of the open boroughs, copying their lordly superiors, and taught by experience to doubt that any good to the public will result from their personal integrity, are become as venal as those superiors could wish; and wages are given to *those members only* who, where liberty or property are concerned, are never known to vote in favor of the people. The pensioner first votes money out of the people's pocket into the treasury, and then attends at the treasury to receive his wages.

The author of a late pamphlet, by way of apology for the late Commander in Chief, for some of his improper military appointments, observed, that *Parliamentary interest must be yielded to*, and we learned from the late investigation, that the recommendations of *Members of Parliament* were regularly entered in a book. It cannot therefore be difficult to understand why Lieut.-General Sir James Pulteney, who once reconnoitered Ferrol, is Secretary at War. Sir James in parliamentary interest outweighs the whole city of London. That city elects only four members. He appoints five: that is, for Weymouth four, and for Shrewsbury one. Lieut.-General Sir Harry Burrard, lately in Portugal, returns as many members as the twelve thousand Electors of Westminster; and the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, Lord Caledon, who lately purchased Old Sarum, where there is not one inhabitant, in like manner returns as many as the Freeholders of Middlesex or of Yorkshire.

Lord Grenville and his family are equally rich in *Boroughs* and in *Sinecures*. Although none of them are now in the public service, they are receiving out of the pockets of the taxed people 29,400*l.* per annum, ascertained amount, exclusive of reversions. Some say much more. And to the Wellesleys

their Boroughs are, as it should seem, tolerably beneficial. Although the Marquis is not *yet* prime minister, one brother is secretary of the Admiralty; another secretary of the Treasury; and a third, secretary of state for Ireland; and was recently *at the same time* a General in Portugal. The joint incomes of the Wellesleys in office, together with their pensions and incomes, amount to 23,767*l.* per annum. To estimate the *parliamentary interest* of this family by the number of seats they are said to command, we find it equals that of all the freeholders of all the maritime counties lying between the River Humber and the Isle of Wight!!! Let these few specimens suffice. What must be the aggregate, were we to trace the history of the whole four hundred and twenty-four?

But, would we truly appreciate the reformation we seek, would we acquaint ourselves with what the want of it has within the short space of the last sixteen years cost our deluded country, we must look with impartial eyes on the *present war*; and consider in what it *originated*.

Mr. Miles, a gentleman employed on secret confidential services by Mr. PITT, and who for those services enjoys a pension, in his letter to the Prince of Wales, published by Bell, Oxford-street, in 1808, says, "It is no secret to your Royal Highness, that Mr. PITT, more attached to his place than to the interests of his country, accepted, in 1791, the disgraceful alternative on which alone he would be allowed to direct your father's councils."

"It is unnecessary to remind you, sir, that France, when this rash resolve was made, *had neither the means nor the disposition to quarrel with her neighbours.*"

This declaration of Mr. Miles seems to have no slight confirmation from the following letter of a truly patriotic nobleman to the writer of these REASONS; in which letter is seen what was the actual conduct of the English ministers, when France, in 1791, (or very early in 1792) was apprehensive of being attacked by Austria and other powers.

"Berners-street, Jan. 3, 1809.

"Dear Sir,

"You desire my testimony on an important subject, you have a right to it, but, if it be your intention to communicate the facts to the public, I expect you will give them fully, or not at all, upon my authority.

"After the French Revolution, and *previously* to the first war between France and Austria, I remember expressing my regret to Monsieur Talleyrand, that two such great and enlightened

“ nations should cut each others throats, for such small objects  
 “ as those which were then the ostensible pretexts for hostility  
 “ between them. He exprest with great warmth and eloquence,  
 “ how totally he coincided with me upon the folly and immora-  
 “ lity of unnecessary wars; and he said that the French nation  
 “ wished to avoid a war with Austria, as much as he did. He  
 “ assured me that the French nation had so high a respect for  
 “ the English nation, as the only *free* country in Europe, except  
 “ France, that the new government in France would willingly  
 “ leave, to his Majesty the King of Great Britain, or to any  
 “ Commissioners his Majesty King George the Third should be  
 “ pleased to appoint, the *settling* the points then in dispute be-  
 “ tween France and Austria.\*

“ I felt, I must confess, great pride and pleasure, as an  
 “ Englishman, at this idea of a reference to the first magistrate  
 “ of my country, as a *free* country, so honourable to us in that  
 “ respect, so handsome on the part of the friends of liberty in  
 “ France, and by preserving peace in Europe, so beneficial to  
 “ humanity. I asked Monsieur Talleyrand whether it was their  
 “ intention to propose to our government such an arbitration?

“ He told me, if they were sure it would be accepted by our  
 “ government, the offer would be made formally; but that they  
 “ did not think it right to make such an offer, if they were not  
 “ certain that it would be *accepted* here. He then said, that, as  
 “ I had several near Relations in the British Cabinet, he should  
 “ be much obliged to me to endeavour to find it out. I replied  
 “ to him that I would do it with great pleasure.

“ I went to Lord Grenville; but, I did not obtain any satis-  
 “ factory answer. He told me *generally*, that he was only one,  
 “ that he must consult others, or to that effect.

“ I then went to my brother-in-law, Mr. PITT. I made a  
 “ full communication of what had passed between Monsieur  
 “ Talleyrand and myself, and I expressed the high satisfaction I  
 “ felt at my having it in my power to give him such pleasing in-  
 “ formation.

“ Mr. PITT, without a moment's hesitation, *rejected* the  
 “ idea totally. I urged with great earnestness, every argument  
 “ which occurred to me in favor of the proposal; but, wholly  
 “ without effect. I received this answer with sensations more  
 “ painful than I have any words to express.

“ Believe me, Dear Sir,

“ Most sincerely your's,

“ John Cartwright, Esq.

“ STANHOPE.”

\* By the noble lord's speech, in parliament, on the 20th of Feb. 1800, it appears that M. Talleyrand and others were at this time in an “ official capacity,” although for reasons of policy here explained, their credentials had not yet been made known to the English ministry.

Here, then, was France (the happy change in whose government had so far altered her sentiments towards her rival, as not to scruple the acknowledgement of the weak and tottering condition of her new constitution) courting the friendship and protection of England, as far as was consistent with self-respect. Had ever English Statesmen such an opportunity of at once cultivating the blessings of peace, and of raising their country to pre-eminence and glory? Had ever English Statesmen such means of acquiring over France an influence beneficial to England; as those who were thus invited to become the arbiters of her disputes with other great states, and the guardians of her very destiny! And to whom she was ready to offer a *carte blanche*! But, after the repulsive conduct of Mr. PITT, it is needless to remark, that these ambassadors of amity had no audience!!! And shall Lord Grenville be envied the recollection of his share of national evil, as an immediate author of the war?

But the English court and its obsequious instrument the *borough faction*, did not view with the same eyes, nor feel with the same sympathies, as the nation, the change in France from a despotic monarchy to a limited sovereignty, by having obtained at that time a representation of the people in her legislature. To the English nation, this was a matter of sincere joy; but to the court and the *borough faction* a cause of grief and of the deepest alarm; because it was seen to beget a confident hope of a reformed representation at home; a hope that gladdened the heart and glowed on the countenance of every honest and intelligent Englishman.— This question between the court and the *borough faction* on the one hand, and the people on the other, was the touch-stone of Mr. PITT'S patriotism. On this touch-stone it was tried and found counterfeit. **THE DEPRAVITY THAT FOLLOWED CANNOT BE CONTEMPLATED WITHOUT A BLUSH FOR HUMAN NATURE.** The minister gave Mr. Burke 37,000*l.* of the public money, for the efforts of his frantic eloquence in blowing up the flame of war, and the subordinate champions of the cause were richly rewarded at the people's expense.\* The associated enemies of reform set up the yell of Jacobin! Jacobin! Jacobin! and our hood-winked and reluctant country was dragged by them into the frightful abyss from which few, few indeed, seem now to entertain even the hope of escape!!!

From the beginning the meaning of the yell, and *the object of the war*, were by the well-informed perfectly understood; and as soon as pensioned pens without number, and the bellow-

\* Mr. Reeves I understand is law clerk of the Board of Trade, a member of the Alien Board, a Commissioner of Bankrupts, and a joint patentee of the office of the King's printer, all together worth about 7,000*l.* a year.

ings of all the venal throats in the island, had succeeded in throwing the nation into a panic terror, so that it scarcely dared to look upon its own distorted resemblance in the fraudulent mirror thus placed before it, the principal champion of the *borough faction*, (a member according to his own declaration of the French Jacobin club at Paris,\* but *recently converted* by a PLACE) was candid enough to speak the truth, as well as bold enough to declare in plain terms, that “*the object of the war,*” was to keep down the “*advocates for improving our representation;*”—whom he was pleased to stile “*Jacobins*”—“*offsets of sedition,*” “*friends of reform, more subtle and more dangerous than banditti, cut throats and Jacobins*”—“*vultures and harpies of reform*”—calling on Mr. Reeves and the other LOYAL associators of the day to guard against their miscreant attempts and “*to call with one voice on the legislature to suppress by vigorous and decisive laws the clubs of sedition,*” not forgetting to remind his paymasters of their duty “*to prosecute.* Will you keep French assassins at a distance, and English Jacobins amenable to English law, by WAR?”† Here we cannot but call to mind a late infamous but abortive attempt at reviving the senseless yell of *Jacobin*, and the impudent imputation of *conspiracy* and *treason*, for silencing Mr. Wardle, and discrediting his witnesses.

And that we might be convinced of the impropriety of attempting any change in the House of Commons, as big with danger to our *happy constitution*, the placeman I have quoted was good enough to inform us, “*that it is mere theory to suppose that the House of Commons purports to be the representatives of the people*”—“*that it never did represent the people*”—“*that it is not responsible to the people*”—“*that the prosperity and happiness we have enjoyed for a century, and never so great as at present, is precisely owing to the House of Commons NOT speaking the will of the people,*” and that “*an unequal representation, rotten boroughs, long parliaments, extravagant courts, selfish ministers, and corrupt majorities, are so intimately interwoven with our practical freedom, that it would require better political anatomists than our modern reformers, to shew in fact, that we did not owe our liberty to the identical evils which they want to expunge.*‡

Such was the audacious language of THE HERALD of the *Borough Faction*, in the pay and under the patronage of ministers; and such the doctrines of a book industriously circu-

\* Young's Travels, p. 276.

† Examp. of France, a warning to Briton, p. 102.

‡ The Example of France, a warning to Britain, By Arthur Young, Esq. page 84, 100, 163, 179, 207, 219, 223, 296.

lated all over the kingdom! We all remember the bitter persecution of parliamentary reformers that soon followed; that the *Borough Faction* and their apostate leader were the persecutors; how long a reign of treachery and terror dishonoured and debased our once high-minded land! And those who have read the trial of the inoffensive Hardy, will not fail to have remarked, that it was actually argued by a crown lawyer, that declarations in favour of “*a full and fair representation of the people in parliament* amounted to high treason.”\* It is the writer’s pride, that in the teeth of the despotism of those disgraceful days, he never ceased publicly to advocate that reform which tyranny thus called “high treason.”

It was to *intoxicate* the English nation, and to deprive it of the capacity of reasoning aright, that the poisoned cups prepared by the *Burkes*, the *Reeveses*, and the *Youngs*, and by writers the most despicable,† were so plentifully urged upon the people. THEY TASTED, AND WERE OVERCOME. But as the vigour of their mental faculty is fast returning, they can now estimate the evils they have experienced, by having drank of the baneful draught of *delusion*, and are happily warned against again becoming the dupes of such fraudulent devices.

Within the *seventeen* years only which have elapsed since the above-mentioned overtures of the *then free* government of France were rejected, the war of the English court and its servile ministers—yes, my Lord Grenville, its *servile* ministers!—A war which from the foregoing premises should seem to have been not only *unjust* and *unnecessary*, but of which the very motive, the direct “OBJECT,” as we have on authority been told, was the destruction of the liberties of our country,—this war, I say, independent of the countless human lives that have been sacrificed on its horrid altar, has already added to our national burden of debt more than 550 millions of pounds, and an additional pressure of 40 millions of pounds to our ANNUAL TAXES. Nor is this all: for this war, which the egregious folly of its blind and wicked projectors fondly imagined was to dismember France and reduce her to insignificance, is giving her, as fast as rapidly-working causes can produce effects, universal continental empire. Nor may we even stop here. Once master of all the European coasts, with the Baltic and Black Seas hermetically sealed against us, her navy must shortly be double or treble that of Eng-

\* Trial by J. Gurney, page 52.

† The rewards heaped upon one *Bowles*, another commissioner of bankrupts and of Dutch prizes, have shewn in a strong point of view, how little scrupulous are men in power, who are hostile to liberty, in the instruments they employ and in the extravagant misapplication of public money for rewarding those instruments.

land; and inferior as it may still be in skill and heroism, it will insure to Napoleon the object at which he aims—the landing of vast armies on the shores of our islands. These, O Englishmen, are the bitter fruits of your representation in parliament having been reduced to an empty husk, a vain shadow, a non-entity, a mockery! That representation must be recovered, or the galling yoke of despotism, most probably the double, and doubly-galling, despotism of a French tyrant and English traitors, his instruments, must ere long be rivetted on your neck! Providence at this awful crisis, as already remarked, has raised us up a *Wardle*. The germ also, of a truly English party in parliament, scorning the selfishness and disdaining the trammels of faction, while it recalls the remembrance of our Marvels and our Miltons, our Russels, our Sidneys, and our Hampdens, is budding forth with all the promise of patriot virtue, and its appearance is universally hailed with affection and transport. In this we see the coming salvation of our country. All we now need are meetings of the people, sober discussion, temperate counsels, constitutional measures, and the characteristic firmness of our nation.

Before I quit the topic of national debt and annual taxes, allow me to repeat a few words addressed to my countrymen ten years ago. “It is not the true objection to the income-tax, that it presses here, or pinches there; that it sweeps into the Exchequer all the little savings of the industrious man, at the hazard of his sinking under unforeseen misfortune, or the visitation of God in the form of sickness; nor that it deprives of various comforts thousands and tens of thousands, who have hitherto had peculiar enjoyment in such comforts, from contemplating them as *the happy fruits of an English constitution*: no, it is, indeed *possible*—it is, I say, *possible*, that under the best constitution of state, the public *necessities* at critical periods might demand such sacrifices: but this is the only question it becomes an Englishman to ask, “*Is this grievous per centage on all income, in addition to endless taxes of all other descriptions, levied on the people of England by a COMMONS’ HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT, SUCH AS ALONE HATH A RIGHT TO TAX THIS NATION; or is it levied by THE ABSOLUTE POWER OF THE KING’S MINISTER?*”

It was not the complaint of the immortal HAMPDEN, that ship-money was an *oppressive burden*; but that it was an *unconstitutional exaction*. This alone was the objection that weighed with that great man. On this ground he resisted the tax, on this ground the nation joined in that resistance; on this ground posterity have done justice to his virtue.

Let me, in the ears of my countrymen, repeat my question.—“*Is this income tax, which must make itself felt like an earthquake in every house on this island, to be levied by REPRESENT-*

TATIVES OF THE PEOPLE; or by the ABSOLUTE POWER OF KING'S MINISTER?

It is a question, I know, that demands sober inquiry and calm discussion. It is through the medium of sober inquiry and calm discussion alone, I invite my countrymen to enter upon it.\* Then give us DISCUSSION! We ask no more. Free and wide DISCUSSION to awaken the nation; that it may examine the pretensions of the *Borough Faction*, the 424, or whatever their precise number may be, to put their hands into its pockets while sleeping, and take out annually SEVENTY MILLIONS STERLING.

Of this astonishing expenditure, not more than about *one hundred and eighty thousand pounds a year* can, it seems, be visibly traced into the private purses of MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT. It may, therefore, be asked, if, for such a trifle *seventy-eight* gentlemen would have plunged their country into, or would continue a war causing such a ruinous expenditure, and threatening the very existence of the state?

Men, it may be answered, of whom we can say *Their right hand is full of bribes*,—Men, who take these bribes to do evil, are not in the habit of calculating consequences; nor do they measure the bribe with the mischief to be produced, but with the sordidness of their own degenerate natures. In proportion to baseness and profligacy, the wages of iniquity are low. Who doubts the readiness of an inveterate thief, to set fire to a cathedral or a palace, were he but certain of carrying off with impunity the communion plate, or even a pocket full of plunder? So he who once sells himself to a minister for his pension or his sinecure, is equally ready to vote for a sixpenny tax, or for a war that is to carry fire, sword, and desolation into the four quarters of the globe.

Give us, I say, DISCUSSION! Free and wide DISCUSSION will soon bring to the minds of the *faction* the wholesome recollection, that they are a very few hundreds; the nation, millions: That they are wrong; the nation right: That, potent as they may fancy themselves, their *faction* stands on the rotten ground of such flagrant injustice, and such intolerable usurpation, as soon as investigation shall have proclaimed its demerits, *not even a parliamentary vote will prevent its quiet resignation*.

That such must be the effect of DISCUSSION who can doubt? Workers of iniquity, men *whose right hand is full of bribes*, as soon as made objects of general observation, if not before, carry about with them a fear-inspiring consciousness. In such a case, the most callous of the *Borough Faction* would be made to feel and to blush. In every one he met he would behold a man he had injured, a neighbour whose property he had invaded, a fellow

\* An Appeal, civil and military, on the subject of the English constitution, 271.



citizen whose liberties he had betrayed. In every countenance he would read indications of scorn. Every whisper to his tortured imagination, would be a criminal accusation; every serious look a verdict of guilty. In fine, when by dint of DISCUSSION, the arguments in support of the English, as happened to those in support of the African SLAVE-TRADE, shall become so offensive and disgusting no man will dare to repeat them, then, like that detested traffic in the persons of the Africans, the equally detested traffic in the liberties of Englishmen, will fall without a struggle, and the English constitution rise once more triumphant.

That this would be the final result of exertion for parliamentary reformation, has never for a moment, since the writer first advocated the cause, ceased to be the settled conviction of his mind. Whether such result would be sooner or later, he saw must depend on contingencies. Considering the obstacles to be overcome, the prejudices to be removed, the knowledge to be disseminated, and the principles to be impressed, he thought it not improbable that half a century might be required for the accomplishment of the work; although a favourable wind and a brisk gale, when least expected, might arise to waft us speedily into port. With these views, at periods the most adverse, and under prospects the most hopeless, he has perseveringly laboured in prosecution of the arduous voyage, and he trusts that such exertions were not altogether without effect. The voyage having as yet lasted only two and thirty years, he has still a great stock of personal patience unexhausted: But the threatening aspect of the Heavens seems now to forebode, that unless the vessel shall early reach the haven of Representation, she must strike on the rock of domestic despotism, or suffer shipwreck in the storm of foreign invasion. Thinking well of his countrymen, he restrains his conviction in favour of a renovated constitution. Where the only choice now remaining, is between tyranny, or conquest, or reformation, Englishmen he trusts will again act, as Englishmen, when they secured to themselves Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights, did act.

‘This reality of representation, and the governing without corruption, that you talk of’ says the man who makes a merit of *minding his own business*, and leaving matters of state to the learned, ‘is a plausible theory, and would be very delightful, were it but practicable; but a Minister must have a majority, or *Government would be at a stand?*’ Now if such objectors *did mind their own business*, they would soon learn, that to defend the rights and liberties of *all*, is the particular *business and duty* of each and every one; a duty which every honest man, who is not disgracefully ignorant, will think it as right to perform as to pay his reckoning at an ordinary where he has dined; or his fare to the stage coachman who has carried him his journey. Is

temporal salvation to be accounted difficult, when eternal salvation is known to be level with every understanding? are the means of preserving our liberty and property on Earth, to be the business of none but the learned; when the means of securing happiness in heaven, is known to be the business of every man for himself, whether learned or unlearned? The truth is, that in both cases the goodness of the Divine Being is equally conspicuous. In both cases, the means of salvation are so simple and so easy, that he who runs may read. They depend more on the Heart than on the Head. A few principles which all above an Idiot may understand, contain all the knowledge essentially necessary to the end in view. Adopted with honesty, and persevered in with steadiness, they will secure the object to which they lead.

By putting a case to those who value themselves on *mind-ing their own business*, perhaps they will see *the reality and uses of representation* in a new light. Let it be remarked, then, that Bankers, and Merchants, who deal annually for millions, do not think it necessary that all persons in their employment should be corrupted by bribes from another party, least *their business should be at a stand*; but contrive to be faithfully served, even in these degenerate times, and to prosper in their affairs, by the simple expedients, of having servants and Representatives of *their own choice*, in *their own pay*, and removable at *their own pleasure*. Whereas, if their Clerks and cashiers could be fastened on them by the Electors of one of *Lord Grenville's* or *Sir Christopher Hawkins's* Cornish Boroughs: if such Clerks and Cashiers could vote to themselves, to their kindred, and Borough Patron, what Salaries and Pensions they pleased out of the money of their Masters; could lend the same to their Pimps, or bribed jurymen, without interest, and without so much as making an entry thereof in any account book; could pay with it the debts of their dead bottle companions, who had died insolvent; could give it away by hundreds of thousands in a job, under pretence of mending a bad bargain made forty years before; could give orders for millions upon millions payable to bearer, then burn the evidences, and laugh at those they had robbed; if in short, they could revel in perpetual pillage without the smallest responsibility for *seven years at a time*; and if at the end of every such septennial period, *Lord Grenville's* or *Sir Christopher Hawkins's* Cornish Borough, could again fasten on them the same, or as honest a set of such representatives, to carry on their business on the same conditions, we all know in what such a system must end.

It was a well-known aphorism of heathen antiquity, that "*Whom God wills to destroy, he first deprives of understanding.*" But we, who have better than heathen lights for our guidance, are taught that governments, factions, and nations, which are

corrupt, have previous admonitions in plenty, and are progressively visited by temporary calamity and *chastisement*, with offered preservation at every step, on condition of returning to the path of integrity: Nor is it until warnings the most awful have been despised, and chastisements of great severity have produced no amendment, that finally comes the vengeance of insulted Heaven. How many governments, how many factions, have we seen smitten by the *iron mace* of him who wears the "*iron crown*?" How many nations do we behold at his feet? And what *Reformation* hath all this yet produced in the government, the factions, or the people of *this land*? During our probation, have we not had *strong delusion*, followed by *merited chastisement*? Have we not drank of calamity deep enough for the recovery of our senses? Hath warning upon warning been wanting to us? Have we not witnessed the catastrophes at Marengo, at Austerlitz, at Jena, and at Friedland, and found that no nation under an *unreformed* government, not even the strongest and least accessible, can stand before *the scourge that is abroad*?

And what has since attracted our attention, and excited our interest, in the Iberian peninsula? First governments, the worst and the weakest crumbling to dust at a mere shake; and antient dynasties expelled from antient thrones. Secondly, the expelling power itself nearly expelled, and the nations sufficiently freed of oppressors to be left to their own energies, trying their capacities for renovation.—These worse than worthless constitutions thus given to the winds, and the sceptres of despotism no longer on their loins, what do the nobles of the land, and the *allies* of these nations do, for *reformation*, for *liberty*, for *just government* in future? With the foe still possessed of some strong fortresses, still master of the passes into the bowels of the country, to France they proclaim defiance and war, in the name of the *expelled princes*; to the people, the *unqualified restoration* of governments under which they have groaned in a slavery the most abject and consuming!!! For *these objects*, they call on the people to shed their blood!!! With *this policy*, they dream of resisting a Napoleon!!! For these objects and on *this policy*, England is lavishing her money and expending the lives of her soldiery.

On Portugal, 'tis needless to dwell. While the struggles in Spain were local and uncombined, scattered sparks and flashes of a free spirit, taken as indications, gave hope of a gathering revolution, to end in a *limitation of sovereignty*, a *restoration of the cortes*, a *renovation of liberty*, together with *prosperity and glory*; but, as soon as all power centered in one supreme Junta, in place of universal liberty and universal arms, instead of an instant emancipation, with a consequent fire and enthusiasm that would soon have swept from the land the last French soldier

had it cost the lives of half the Spanish nation, a dull lecture, on the duties of government and of obedience, makes its appearance; whereas the moment *Napoleon* has fought his way to Madrid, he proclaims aloud redress of specific grievances, exemption from hateful services, extinction of pillaging abuses, and deliverance from an infernal power, more dreadful than the axe or gibbet of civil despotism, more terrific than war, pestilence and famine!!! What a contrast! *Napoleon the only reformer!* His infatuated adversaries every where incurably blind; every where the pertinacious upholders of antient PRACTICE and USAGE; that is, of abuse, corruption, and oppression! Have English ministers nothing here to answer for?

It assuredly was not possible the common cause should succeed, without conferring on Spain and Portugal, *reformation, liberty, and just government.* Were, or were not, these made the *conditions*, on which English blood and treasure should be poured out upon the peninsula? And will even the fall of Spain and Portugal, by such insanity and wickedness, open no eyes in England? Will ministers as regardless in England as they have been in Spain, and Portugal, of *reformation, liberty, and just government*, still cling to their place-pension—and sinecure system? Will our nobility and our would-be lords, still hug to their bosom, with sentiments the most unjust and sordid, the opprobrium of the constitution, the pestilence of their country? Will they pertinaciously adhere to their respective corruptions and usurpations, heedless of consequences? will they wholly abandon to *Napoleon* when he may issue his proclamations from Head Quarters at *Windsor castle*, or from his camp on *Epping Forest* or *Blackheath*, the character of *Reformer*? Will these our Statemen and legislators facilitate the conquest of the kingdom, by allowing the *Invader* to be the first *Redresser of national Grievances*? Shall it be left to *him*, to set the example of purging from abuse Greenwich and Christ's Hospitals and other English Charities, as well as to improve the condition of the inferior clergy, as he is purging Spain of her Monastries, improving the cures, and applying the savings to public purposes? Is *he* to have the merit, of first acting on the advice of Lord Chatham, to lopp off the the rotten Burgage Tenures of England, as he is lopping off the rotten Feudal tenures of Spain?

Will the Marquis of *Buckingham*, will Lord *Grenville*, will the Earl of *Liverpool*, will the *Speaker of the House of Commons*, or Mr. *Perceval*, and the rest of the *sine-cure* band, still resist a restoration of our rights of representation, and still call what *they* receive out of the "public imposts" their "freehold estates," until the same *Napoleon* shall pronounce, as in Spain he has pronounced, that "the *alienation of public imposts* is one of the *greater abuses* which have been introduced into the

finances of" England,—that "*public imposts* are from their nature *unalienable*," and that "individuals, who shall be in possession either by *grant* from the king, or by *sale*, or by *any other means*, of any portion whatever of the civil or ecclesiastical imposts, shall cease to receive them?"\* And, finally, when we talk of violated rights and ask for justice, shall the factions both in and out of office, suspending their bitter criminations and sarcastic recriminations of each other, mutually agree to *make common cause against our claims*, either by reviving the hackneyed sophistries which have been a thousand times refuted, or by repeating, with parrot gabble and magpye mockery, the stupid phrase of "*This is not the time;*" and leave it to the mighty one who has already in Spain decreed the abolition of the hell-born *Inquisition*, to be the person who here in England shall decree the abolition of the hell-born *Borough System*?

It having been a fashion of late, to apologize for unconstitutional conduct in ministers, by pretending they have been overruled by *a superior will*, let us see what has come to light respecting *our sovereign's sentiments* touching a real and fair representation of his People in Parliament. We shall then be the better able to judge whether it be to the *King*, whose interest it is the constitution should be kept whole and undefiled, or to *ministers* who so uniformly identify their interest with that of the *Borough Factions*, we owe all the wounds inflicted on our bleeding country by the scourge of merciless faction. We find, first, that on the overthrow of Lord North's ministry in 1782, a negotiation took place, when amongst "the principal terms proposed to *His Majesty* through Lord Chancellor *Thurlow*, on which Lord *Rockingham* and his friends would engage in administration, one was, that the discussion in Parliament, of a *Reform in the Representation of the People* in the House of Commons, should be agreed to."† Secondly; at the time Mr. *PITT* was first offered the seals, as Minister, it was necessary for him to state how he stood pledged to the People for a *Reformation of Parliament*; on which occasion, as the writer was informed by the late Duke of *Richmond*, that Gentleman was graciously answered, that *that matter was left in his hands, to be disposed of as he should think fit*; the King, in his speech from the throne in 1785, did allude to the proposed reform, and Mr. Pitt did propose it, although in an exceptionable form. In both these instances, we see ministers advocates for the reform, and his Majesty perfectly acquiescent.

In what follows, the father of his people will be seen to

\* See the Proclamations and Decrees dated from the Camp at Madrid.

† Wyvill's Polit. Pap. III. 355.

have acted more from the genuine feelings of his mind, than can be ascribed to a sovereign who adopts the advice of his minister. Residing at Weymouth during the contested Election in 1802, when Mr. *Arbuthnot* stood forward as a candidate, in the interest of the numerous freeholders of that borough, against the patron whose predecessor had by intrigue and shameful practices reduced its freedom to a non-entity, and secured to himself *the appointment of the four members*, his Majesty, in that small retreat from cares and Councils, condescending to converse with persons of various ranks and classes, could not but become acquainted with both the contest itself, and with its merits. And the writer has reason to believe it was apparent, that his Majesty, as a man, and as a friend to freedom and justice took in Mr. *Arbuthnot's* success considerable interest; while his respect for the constitution would not allow him to think of an interference. Our sovereign therefore is our friend, and we have only to prosecute our suit with propriety and perseverance, to be certain of success. Our suit hath already lasted two and thirty years. Our Right is indisputable. On our success depends not only our own liberty, but all that nobility and royalty possess in these islands; for, should emancipation from the intolerable yoke of the *Borough Factions*, equally hostile, equally oppressive to the Nation and the King, not to be obtained, what, in the final day of conflict with that power which has nearly subdued the last remnant of the continent, have we to expect, but that the corruptions of government must here, as they so uniformly have done elsewhere, cause the subjugation of our country by the arms of France; the extinction of the nobility, and a grant of their estates to French generals; the fate of a Duc d'Enghein and the Spanish Bourbons, to the royal family of England; and a transfer of the throne to a member of the imperial and royal house of Napoleon?

That what I have said respecting the exclusion of placemen from the House of Commons may not be misunderstood, nor rejected as impracticable, let me add, that fully admitting the propriety, and even the necessity, for purposes of information and explanation on matters of executive government; as well as for proposing laws, or the amending or repealing of laws, that a competent number of the King's ministers presiding over the chief departments of the state, or an equal number of agents on behalf of such departments, should at all times have an unrestrained right of entry into, and of presence in the Commons House, with suitable accommodation and entire freedom of speech; yet it is not only unnecessary and improper, but manifestly absurd, and dangerous to public liberty, that the same persons should, at one and the same time, be the *executive* servants of

the CROWN, and the *legislative* representers of the PEOPLE in the pay of the very power it is their duty to check and controul; and that a practice so monstrous is in direct opposition to the principles of the ENGLISH CONSTITUTION, as asserted and recognized in the Act of the 12th and 13th of William III, c. 2, for settling the succession to the crown on the family of his present Majesty: wherefore no such ministers or agents of the *executive* power can constitutionally be MEMBERS of a House of Commons, nor can by any possibility have in any case a right to vote.

THE END.

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BY JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq.

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